

Sarah Peters

Essay 2

Introduction and Reflection

4/20/17

\*Names were changed to protect identity\*

This oral history project was very beneficial and I feel like I learned a lot. I met Marta when I volunteered at Education Matters. She goes there to learn and practice English so that she can eventually apply for a job in Cincinnati. Marta is from Mexico, but she came to the United States because her husband was offered a job here. He is fluent in English and can offer the company what they were looking for in Cincinnati. At first, Marta was not sure if she wanted to leave Mexico because all of her family lives there, but the opportunities in the United States were what she was hoping and looking for. I am very thankful that I had the opportunity to interview Marta about her history because she helped me to learn more about the community in Mexico and how it compares to the community that we have here in the United States. She is a very loving and positive person who looks at her life as opportunities and she can really see the love in the world.

When I first told Marta about this project, I said that it was about her journey to the United States; but when I was talking to her, I realized that it was so much more. It is about the change she experienced and her opinions about both countries and how she breaks the stereotype of an immigrant. She didn't have an extravagant journey to the United States that was very complicated. It was easy for her to get a visa and come to Cincinnati and she does not feel like a stranger in the community. She does not feel and hatred or exiled, but this does not

take away from her identity of an immigrant. Just because she did not have to go through all the difficulties that are stereotyped when you think of an immigrant and their journey, her identity remains as one of an immigrant as well as a latino, a Mexican, a member of the Cincinnati community, and whatever else she wants to be identified as.

One of the big things that I found interesting during our conversation was how she felt like there was a big sense of community in her Cincinnati area. I live on a college campus and I feel a great sense of community, but I did not imagine that this feeling of community would follow me after college. Especially in a city, I cannot imagine that it would be easy to go to your neighbors and ask for something that you needed and know everyone who lives around you. I grew up in a small suburb where I know all of my neighbors, but I have always thought that this was something that only existed in the suburbs and cannot be true about a city or close to a city. However, I was very happy to hear that Marta feels that type of community and family in her neighborhood. I think that they have such a strong connection because all the people in her neighborhood have a lot in common. They all take the same bus and they can get to know each other as they walk around the neighborhood or go to places like Education Matters. I think that community is something that is very important to find and I am glad and impressed that Cincinnati is so welcoming and that there are neighborhoods that can turn into families.

Overall, I believe that this was a great opportunity and I learned a lot about the importance of oral history and how interesting it is to hear someone tell their story. Everyone in the world has a different oral history and goes through different challenges and things in their life, so it is very important that people have the opportunity to read or listen to the history of other people and relate to them and their experiences. Even if you cannot relate to

someone else's experiences, it gives you a new and different perspective on life and it is a way to help people grow.